
Five Ukrainian officers arrested for war crimes



The Russia's Investigative Committee has questioned 400 Ukrainian soldiers and border guards, who crossed into Russia on 3 August 2014, as part of an investigation into the use of banned means and methods of conducting war (part 1 of article 356 of the RF Penal Code).

The investigators have carried out a number of investigating operations to see if the said soldiers were involved in the crimes against civilians in the Luhansk and Donetsk Regions. Based on the data received they have detained as suspects commander of 1st battalion of 72nd mechanized brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Ivan Voitenko, and his subordinates: second-in-command Vitaly Dubinyak, commander of tank battalion Alexander Polyakov, head of headquarters Alexander Okhrimenko and commander of 1st company Dmitry Ustilko. In their testimonies the detainees admit that they took part in military operations and used different weapons. However, they deny having used the weapons against civilians. But Russian investigators have evidence on their hands that it was the 72nd brigade who at Voitenko's orders between 19 July and 3 August while bombarding the towns of Krasnopartizansk and Krasnodon in Luhansk Region used some heavy assault unselective weaponry killing and wounding at least 10 civilians and destroying at least 20

homes and social facilities. The data are confirmed by the testimonies of other soldiers serving in the brigade and who crossed into Russia.

Considering that the weapons in disposal of the 72nd brigade is similar to the kinds that can be used to bombard with the shells staffed with petrol bombs N-17 (so-called phosphorus shells), the investigators are now checking if the detainees used those ammunitions banned by international law. They are also checked on having been involved in shelling Russian territory.

Today a court has ruled to place all five suspects into custody.

It is highly unlikely that the detained Ukrainian soldiers intoxicated by nationalism taking off for the punishment operation could have imagined that they would have to answer for their crimes sooner or later. Now instead of bravura marches on Maidan, which they probably pictured, instead of promised awards they will face trial, sentence and eventually just punishment. In future they may meet with their countrymen members of UNA-UNSO who will be serving long terms in Russian prisons for the crimes they committed against Russian citizens.

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